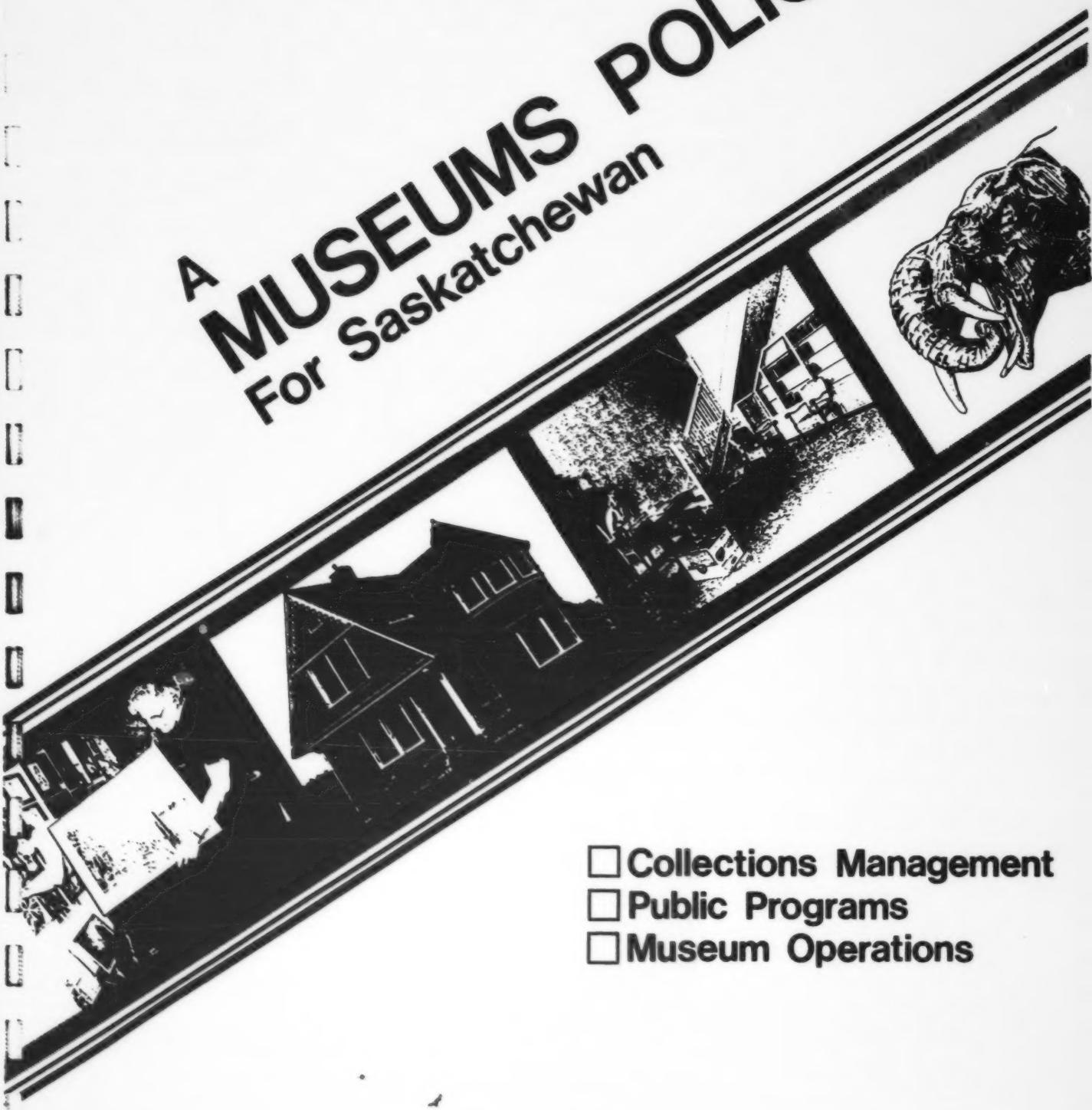
Saskatchewan
Culture,
Multiculturalism
and Recreation

Hon. Colin Maxwell
Minister

A MUSEUMS POLICY For Saskatchewan



- ☐ Collections Management
- ☐ Public Programs
- ☐ Museum Operations

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary		**Page I**
I	**Introduction**	**Page 1**
II	**Definitions**	**Page 3**
III	**Government and Museums**	**Page 4**
IV	**Provincial Museums Policy Statement**	**Page 5**
V	**Goals**	**Page 6**
VI	**Roles**	**Page 7**
VII	**Priorities**	**Page 11**
	Collections Management	Page 11
	Public Programs	Page 11
	Operations	Page 12
VIII	**A Strategy for the Future**	**Page 13**
IX	**Conclusion**	**Page 16**

Executive Summary

The decision to develop A Museums Policy for Saskatchewan resulted from recent museum community growth, museums' limited human and financial resources, and lack of an overall strategy for museum support and development.

The museum policy development process involved two years of consultation with groups and individuals representing the Saskatchewan museum community. Discussion papers were presented at the Museums Association of Saskatchewan's Advisory Council meeting (1987) and at the Saskatchewan Parks, Recreation and Culture's Museum Policy Search Conference (1988). A draft policy was circulated in autumn 1988, followed by a series of regional meetings held between November 1988 and January 1989. These meetings and written briefs provided direction for the final draft.

The policy considers the museum community's current state with the intent of identifying the future needs of museums and the public. This policy is intended as a framework by which museums, governments and associations can define their roles, target their programs and support, and co-ordinate their efforts to meet identified needs.

A Museums Policy for Saskatchewan outlines the development of the Saskatchewan museum community over the next decade. It sets out the primary roles and responsibilities of the provincial government with respect to museums, specifically through the mandate of the Department of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation.

A Provincial Museums Policy Statement

The Saskatchewan government will support the development of a provincial museum community which works towards these common objectives:

- to acquire and preserve collections representative of the natural and cultural heritage of Saskatchewan; and
- to impart knowledge, awareness and understanding to the public by researching, documenting, exhibiting and interpreting those collections.

Goals in Establishing a Provincial Museums Policy

- To outline the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government, museums and other agencies in managing museum development;
- To increase knowledge about museum collections;
- To make museum collections more representative of the province and its natural and cultural heritage;
- To improve the state of preservation of museum collections;
- To improve the quality of Saskatchewan museums;
- To increase and diversify sources of support to museums;
- To encourage museum workers to take advantage of training and other opportunities to upgrade their skills;
- To encourage greater co-operation among museums in collections, conservation, communications, promotions and programming;
- To provide museums with information management tools and skills;
- To encourage museums and the tourism sector to work together; and
- To provide all Saskatchewan residents more opportunities for access and participation in museums.

The policy also identifies issues currently facing the Saskatchewan museum community and sets out a proposed strategy by which some of these concerns can be addressed. The Saskatchewan government's role, through the Department of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation, is to distribute the resources at its disposal to the museum community to support and strengthen a provincial museum network. It will accomplish this through:

- providing leadership;
- providing financial support;
- developing grant programs;
- providing assistance through the expertise of its staff;
- operating facilities;
- managing collections; and
- working co-operatively with various government departments and other levels of government.

I. Introduction

The museum's traditional role has been to collect, preserve and distribute knowledge about our planet, its processes and its inhabitants. While this remains the central focus of museums, museum boards and staff are now finding they must change their programs and services to accommodate broader involvement by the public. Since the 1960s, the celebration of community anniversaries in Saskatchewan has created a new awareness of heritage. Individuals have become interested in tracing their roots and confirming their involvement in the country's development. A widespread, re-awakened public interest in heritage is evident in all provincial historical and cultural activities.

Growth in heritage awareness has raised the public's expectations of museums and generated more competition for resources and support among various heritage interest groups. Many new community and specialized museums have also been created as a result of this trend. These new museums tap into the resource base of traditional, established museums that must now compete with the newcomers for grants, volunteers, private sector support and audience.

Saskatchewan's museums provide a source of community pride and a continuum with the past.

At the same time, governments, as the traditional source of support for museums, find the economic climate of the past decade has eroded the dollar's buying power. As a result, available funds are divided in increasingly smaller portions. Museums in turn, have less money for outward-directed programs and must gradually withdraw to a near static position.

Many other rapid and extensive social, technological, economic and demographic changes affect our current culture and our museums.

Today's public is a more diverse entity than it was two or three decades ago. Multicultural policies encourage the recognition and awareness of our country's many ethnic groups and nationalities. These groups, and Canada's indigenous people, expect museums to represent their cultural perspectives as well as the traditional white-European story.

Canadians rate the environment as a major concern. Museums can promote understanding of the balance between our survival and that of the earth's. They can also contribute to Canadian scientific literacy and the creation of innovative technology by popularizing science and technology and showing their importance to society and our economy.

Museums have a significant role in society as educational institutions. Today's public expects to have more opportunities for formal and informal learning. Museums provide a focus for lifelong learning for all age groups. Research enables museums, through their programs and exhibits, to present authentic, easily accessible information. Our visual, information-oriented society requires museums to invest in current technology like computers and audio visual aids to satisfy existing audiences and to reach new ones.

Museums can influence social change. Given adequate resources, museums provide an honest, humanistic perspective on the past, an appraisal of our current state, and a prediction of where we are going. Museums can be a catalyst, bringing communities together and encouraging communication between people of different ages, cultural backgrounds and economic circumstances.

Museums today face two options: **change, or become a casualty of the process of change**. To survive, the museum's role must expand to address three major issues. Firstly, museums must be able to compete with public and commercial attractions which use cultural and heritage resources as a commodity to attract customers. Secondly, they must find better ways to build relationships with other heritage and cultural groups. Thirdly, museums must find a way to address the needs and expectations of contemporary society.

It is the responsibility of the provincial government and other agencies which provide support to museums, to act as catalysts, enablers and advocates in that process.

There are several **principles guiding a provincial museums policy:**

- Saskatchewan's museums are responsible for managing their collections as part of the province's heritage resources. As keepers of collections held in the public trust, they receive public support to ensure protection of that resource.
- Saskatchewan's museums provide a source of community pride and a continuum with the past. They improve the quality of life by providing opportunities for cultural expression and recreational activity.
- Museums serve an educational role, formally through links with the school system and informally by providing the heritage consumer with awareness, knowledge and understanding. Museums and their collections must be accessible to the public to ensure knowledge of Saskatchewan's heritage is passed on.
- Saskatchewan's heritage resources, natural and man-made are diverse. They represent many different developmental stages and cultural backgrounds. Significant artifacts, specimens, art works, documents and other objects must be collected to ensure that the diversity of Saskatchewan's natural and cultural heritage is represented in our museums.
- Museums create jobs and other economic spin-offs. Museums and galleries stimulate economic growth and investment by attracting tourists and other visitors. Museums require adequate resources to enable them to operate efficiently and generate benefits to their community.
- Research is a central function of museums. By using applied research, museums help create and distribute knowledge about our world. Museums must be able to carry out the critical function of research and to distribute their research through publications and other media.
- Museums are users and generators of information. As their levels of sophistication and activity increase, so do their needs for technology to streamline their information management systems. These systems will allow them to operate more effectively and improve their service to the public.

II. Definitions

Heritage

Heritage in museum terms means both natural and cultural heritage. **Natural heritage** includes the products of nature such as faunal and floral specimens, paleontological remains, geological samples, and the products of our influence on the environment in which we live.

Cultural heritage includes artifacts which represent human activity from prehistoric times to the present. It refers to objects and works which illustrate the diverse range of cultural groups and societies that inhabit the planet, the creations of artists, and the products of technological and scientific knowledge. Cultural heritage also includes intangible evidence of cultures, such as traditions, ideologies, beliefs and value systems.

Our heritage tells us who we are, where we have come from, and what we have accomplished. Museums play a central role in this process since they are not only storehouses, but centres of preservation, learning, and research. They provide their audiences with education, entertainment and enrichment.

Museum

The definition of **museum** which applies to this document is that used by the Museums Association of Saskatchewan (MAS):

> **"Museum[s]"** designates a non-profit permanent establishment exempt from federal and provincial income taxes, open to the public and administered in the public interest for the primary purpose of collecting, preserving, studying, interpreting and/or exhibiting objects, specimens and/or records of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific, historical and /or technological material."[1]

[1] Articles and Bylaws of the Saskatchewan Museums Association, May 1986

III. Government and Museums

Saskatchewan museums represent significant investment of human and financial resources by individuals, communities, agencies, associations and governments. In 1985, 118 Saskatchewan museums and art galleries employed 340 full and part-time staff and 2,311 volunteers. They generated $7,678,933 in revenue and received 1,130,538 visitors. Provincial government sources accounted for $3,074,419 of their revenue.

The provincial government has traditionally supported museums through a combination of funding and services since the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History was established in 1906. The passage of the Western Development Museum Act in 1949 established provincial responsibility for the operation of that institution.

In 1945, The Saskatchewan Archives Act was passed giving the government responsibility for preserving public and private historical records. The Saskatchewan Arts Board Act was passed in 1948, establishing an agency that was the first of its kind in North America. In 1955, the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History opened in a new location on the corner of Albert Street and College Avenue in Regina. It was one of the first museums in the province housed in a building that met, at that time, national museum standards.

Community museum support began in 1972 under the Department of Culture and Youth. In 1982 the Museum and Gallery Grant Program was created, under the Department of Culture and Recreation, with an expanded budget and tiered levels of support. Since 1982, the number of museums applying for operating assistance has increased over 40 per cent. Although funding levels have also increased, the impact has been diluted due to the growing demand for grants from newly formed museums. Museums have also grown in size and complexity. In 1989, of one hundred and twenty museums applying for funding, 30 provided programs of regional or provincial scope, hired full-time museum professionals and operated year round. This compares with only seventeen similar institutions operating in 1982.

In 1989, total provincial funding from government and lottery sources to museums and related agencies amounted to more than $5,000,000 dollars annually, including commitments to:

- Museum and Gallery Grant Program
- Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History
- Provincial Historic Parks
- Western Development Museums
- Saskatchewan Arts Board
- Saskatchewan Archives Board
- Museums Association of Saskatchewan

The Department of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation is given the primary mandate for cultural and heritage support and development. However, many other provincial government departments have programs, policies or services that affect museums. Some of these are: Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources; Human Resources, Labour and Employment; Urban Affairs; Economic Diversification and Trade; Education; and Consumer and Commercial Affairs.

Other provincial sources of support to museums have also developed through lottery funded agencies, such as the Museums Association of Saskatchewan. It offers a range of training programs, advisory and communications services to museums.

Since the provincial government first began its support for museums, their numbers have grown from a mere handful to over 200. The trend to establish museums is continuing at a steady rate while budgets for funding and other support-services remain static. Funding and support agencies must therefore consider priorities for overall museum development when designing their policies and programs. In the past, support had few restrictions placed on it. The emphasis now, however, must be on developing the expertise to manage the growing museum collections. Museums must be encouraged to become self-reliant and to operate according to accepted standards. In this way the province's heritage resources will be properly managed.

The provincial government has taken a leadership role in drafting a museums policy to guide the development of Saskatchewan museums over the next decade. This policy identifies the objectives, roles, and responsibilities of the provincial government, and establishes provincial priorities for the support and development of the province's museums.

IV. Provincial Museums Policy Statement

The Saskatchewan government will support the development of a provincial museum community which works towards these common objectives:

- to acquire and preserve collections representative of the natural and cultural heritage of Saskatchewan; and
- to impart knowledge, and to promote awareness and understanding to the public by researching, documenting, exhibiting and interpreting those collections.

V. Goals

The goals in establishing a provincial museums policy are:

- To outline the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government, museums and other agencies in managing museum development;
- To increase the extent of knowledge about museum collections;
- To make museum collections more representative of the province and its natural and cultural heritage;
- To improve the state of preservation of museum collections;
- To improve the quality of Saskatchewan museums;
- To increase and diversify sources of support to museums;
- To encourage museum workers to take advantage of training and other opportunities to upgrade their skills;
- To encourage greater co-operation among museums in collections, conservation, communications, promotions and programming;
- To provide museums with information management tools and skills;
- To encourage museums and the tourism sector to work together; and
- To provide all Saskatchewan residents more opportunities for access and participation in museums.

VI. Roles

The Role of Museums

There are many parts to the role which museums play within their immediate community and in society. Their fundamental roles are:

- to preserve and protect objects representing our natural and cultural heritage;
- to increase and disperse knowledge about Saskatchewan's natural and cultural heritage; and
- to provide public access to museum collections.

The Saskatchewan Museum Community

1. The Public Trust

Saskatchewan museums have been established at a higher rate than in most provinces, with a ratio of one museum for every 5,000 people. This shows Saskatchewan people's pride in their heritage. Once a museum begins as a public, non-profit institution, it becomes responsible for a collection of heritage resources which belongs to the public who support the costs of its care.

2. Effective Management

Accepting responsibility for a collection means that a museum board must recognize their role in running the museum according to accepted standards and procedures. They must also be aware of the broader role the museum plays within the surrounding community.

Proper management of museums can be influenced by:

- involvement of trained museum workers and board members in museum planning and operations;
- capital and operational levels of support;
- collection quality and scope;
- public programming level and quality;
- the facility in which the museum is housed; and
- characteristics of the surrounding community.

These factors can have a significant effect on whether the museum fulfils its stewardship role adequately and whether its community actively supports it.

3. The Community or the Object?

Since the museum community has become increasingly diversified, there are varying degrees to which museums perform their role. Some museums are centred on their collections and the activities which focus on collection preservation. Other museums have developed an emphasis on outward-directed programs and on building their relationship with their community. In Saskatchewan, both types of museums are well represented. Each has an equally valid role in museum community development.

Only a small percentage of Saskatchewan museums are in a position to place primary emphasis on collection preservation and management. To accomplish this requires significant levels of funding to:

- hire specialized, professional staff;
- maintain an environmentally secure facility;
- operate regularly on a year-round basis;
- have enough space for public and support services;
- operate collections and programs according to accepted museological standards; and
- conduct research and produce publications.

4. Public Access

Regardless of a museum's primary focus (the community or the object), public access must be a basic axiom of the museum's role. Access must be physical, allowing individuals to see or experience artifacts or art work firsthand. Access must also be intellectual, meaning that objects are presented with information on them in the form of labels, catalogues, audio-visual material, lectures or seminars, and other presentation/interpretation methods.

By using an effective combination of physical stimuli and interpretive documentation, a museum can be an instrument for developing public awareness and influencing social change. Museums can broaden attitudes and enhance their audience's awareness and understanding through its exhibitions and related programs.

Saskatchewan's population challenges museums concerned with providing access to the public. This is complicated because Saskatchewan has:

- a higher proportion of senior citizens than other provinces;
- a higher percentage of the population living in rural areas;
- a higher volunteer to staff ratio; and
- a more ethnically diverse population than other provinces.

The Provincial Government

The Saskatchewan government has traditionally had the primary responsibility for ensuring that museum collections, characteristic of Saskatchewan's heritage, are identified, collected, documented, preserved, and interpreted for present and future generations. It has recognized this role by creating legislation to encourage the province's heritage and cultural development. Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation has the primary mandate for arts, cultural and heritage development on behalf of the provincial government. Other departments and agencies involved in supporting museum activity include Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources who operate the province's historic parks, Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade who promote heritage tourism and Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation who own and operate cultural and heritage facilities

The province has provided leadership to Saskatchewan museums by developing heritage and culture policies that address the needs of museums and the public. The government undertakes planning, research and policy development to analyze trends and initiate action in the province's museum community in response to identified needs.

Creating a balanced approach to museum development is also one of government's roles. This is accomplished through programs which stress:

- operating according to accepted museological standards;
- building representative collections;
- developing museological skills and expertise;
- strengthening collaborative networks; and
- creating a diversified base of support for museums.

Government acts as a catalyst, enabler, supporter, promoter, and monitor of programs and activities which support museum development.

Support of opportunities to participate in and benefit from museum operations is also a government responsibility. Programs supported by the provincial government will take into consideration more opportunities for access by all Saskatchewan residents.

The Saskatchewan government represents the Saskatchewan museum community's interests to other levels of government on museum issues. Government also facilitates exchanges of cultural and historical exhibitions and collections between Saskatchewan and other provinces or countries, on behalf of, and with the co-operation of the museum community.

Another government role is to encourage a supportive relationship between government agencies and departments whose services and programs may affect the museum community. The Saskatchewan government works co-operatively with the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, individual museums and other organizations representing museums and the volunteer community, to ensure that the goals for museum development are met.

Finally, the Saskatchewan government provides assistance in the form of budget allocations, grants, and services to public museums which preserve and interpret heritage collections. This includes the creation and regular review of grant and subsidy programs as determined through consultation with the museum community and its various audiences.

Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation

Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation has the primary mandate for arts, cultural and heritage development on behalf of the provincial government. Museums can access a range of the department's programs, services and expertise.

The Heritage Branch administers two grant programs. The Museum and Gallery Grant Program provides operating and project support to museums. The Heritage Grant Program provides grants for Saskatchewan heritage resource research, identification and restoration. The branch also administers the Donations to the Crown Program. It provides tax incentives for private citizens to donate their heritage collections to the province. The Heritage Branch also has direct regulatory authority for The Heritage Property Act. The Act governs any activity affecting protection of the province's heritage resources, including management of archaeological resources and designated heritage property.

The Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History as an agency of the Heritage Branch has the mandate to collect, preserve and further the understanding of Saskatchewan's natural history and native cultural history. The museum has a collection of over 750,000 specimens and artifacts, and a professional staff of 35. The museum's conservation program is part of the provincial conservation service. The museum also administers

Government House Historic Property in Regina, the restored residence of Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor from 1891 - 1945.

The Arts and Multicultural Branch provides the Cultural Assistance Program to which museums can apply for workshop funding. The branch also has six zone consultants around the province to help museums with organizational development and accessing government programs.

The Saskatchewan Arts Board is an arms-length agency of SCMR which exists to support and encourage study and presentation of the arts, to assist with the development of artists, to provide Saskatchewan people with opportunities to participate in creative arts activities, and to promote the development and maintenance of standards for these activities. The Arts Board provides professional art galleries with program and special project funding to assist with the production/extension and promotion of art exhibitions. It also maintains a collection of original works of art by Saskatchewan artists.

The Saskatchewan Archives Board is a corporate body appointed jointly by the provincial government and the two universities which operates at arms-length from the department. It was created to locate, select, acquire, arrange, describe, preserve, and make accessible Saskatchewan historical documentary material in all media, from public and private sources. The Archives will also become part of the provincial conservation service when its conservation facility is fully functional.

The Saskatchewan Western Development Museums, with branches in Yorkton, North Battleford, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon receive an annual operations grant from the department as an arms-length agency. They have 25 professional staff and a collection of over 70,000 artifacts. They serve a province-wide mandate to collect, preserve and exhibit items on western Canadian economic and cultural development from the settlement period to the present. The museum will also provide part of the provincial conservation service through their conservation program.

The Federal Government

Most programs available to the national museum community fall under Communications Canada. The Museum Assistance Program, the Canadian Conservation Institute, and the Canadian Heritage Information Network provide funding, technical and advisory services directly to major museums. The Cultural Property Export Review Board, the Cultural Initiatives Program and the Canada Council also fund museums for specific programs and purchases.

The four national museums, the National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization, National Museum of Science and Technology, and National Museum of Natural Sciences, operate independently from the federal government. They have a mandate, however, to provide services and outreach to other non-federal museums across Canada. The Dominion Archives of Canada also provides programs and services which museums may occasionally use.

Employment and Immigration Canada also provides many programs that Saskatchewan museums use. The Canadian Jobs Strategy and new programs announced under the Labour Force Strategy may have applications for Saskatchewan museums. Many museums use the annual Opportunities Program to hire students for summer employment.

Environment Canada, through the Canadian Parks Service, is responsible for the operation of four National Historic Parks at Fort Walsh, Fort Battleford, Batoche and Motherwell Homestead and Prince Albert National Park. The Canadian Parks Service produces publications and supports research on historic sites and events. The staff of the Prairie Region provide reference and inquiry services to museums.

Municipal Governments

In Saskatchewan, municipal governments have varied levels of commitment and support for museums. Municipal involvement with museums often includes membership on the museum board, or establishing the museum board as a committee of council. Most municipal governments provide a range of services to museums including:

- forgiving property taxes;
- assistance with facility maintenance and operation;
- seasonal staff;
- utility payments;
- bookkeeping and clerical services;
- funding;
- policy development;
- facility design;
- collection management; and
- consultation.

Museums usually receive municipal funding on an individual basis according to local priorities.

Other Agencies

The principal agencies currently providing services and support to the Saskatchewan museum community have a major role in implementing a provincial museums policy. They are encouraged to work co-operatively towards satisfying museum and public needs. These agencies include the following:

Sask Sport Inc.

The Minister of Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation authorizes Sask Sport Inc. to operate lotteries in Saskatchewan. Sask Sport Inc. distributes a portion of the profits to support the development of provincial organizations through Sask Trust for Sport, Culture and Recreation.

Sask Trust distributes funding to provincial organizations through three umbrella groups:

- Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations;
- Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association; and
- Sask Sport.

The Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations (SCCO) is the cultural umbrella group with 28 members, designated as Provincial Cultural Organizations. SCCO directs operating funding from Sask Trust to each of the 28 member cultural organizations. The provincial heritage organizations receiving lottery funds are:

- Museums Association of Saskatchewan;
- Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society;
- Saskatchewan Archaeological Society;
- Saskatchewan Genealogical Society;
- Saskatchewan Architectural Heritage Society; and
- Saskatchewan Natural History Society.

The proceeds from lottery profits administered under Sask Sport Inc. are also directed towards supporting some programs established by Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation. One of these is the Museum and Gallery Grant Program.

Museums may also receive lottery funding benefits through the Trust Initiatives Program (TIP) or workshop funding. Both are available through the Regional Recreation Associations of the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA).

The Museums Association of Saskatchewan

The Museums Association of Saskatchewan (MAS), incorporated in 1968, is a provincial cultural organization representing the interests of Saskatchewan museums and museum workers.

MAS serves the museum community through training courses for volunteer and professional museum workers, advisory services to community museum workers on technical matters, and opportunities for communication and liaison between museums and museum professionals. It produces two periodicals, Liaison and Bulletin, and recently published a museum travel guide.

MAS promotes the operation of museums according to recognized standards and produced Standards for Saskatchewan Museums as a guide museums can use for their self-evaluation. The Community Museum Networker system provides support to smaller museums in pooling resources and coordinating their efforts. The association's Museum Advisor is responsible for coordinating inquiries to the Conservation Extension Service of the Saskatchewan Heritage Collections Conservation Committee.

The MAS membership elects members to the department's Grants Advisory Committee. The association also plays a primary role in the advocacy of museums to government and the public. MAS has been closely involved with museum policy development.

The Saskatchewan Heritage Collections Conservation Committee

The Saskatchewan Heritage Collections Conservation Committee is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of A Conservation Strategy for Saskatchewan Heritage Collections. This strategy was developed to provide a provincial conservation service to Saskatchewan museums. The service will be delivered through the conservation departments of the following custodial institutions:

- Mackenzie Art Gallery;
- Saskatchewan Archives Board;
- Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History; and
- Western Development Museum's Provincial Service Centre.

The committee membership also includes representation from the Mendel Art Gallery, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Conservation Institute and Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation.

The committee is responsible for ensuring the preservation of significant heritage collections in the province. It acts as an advisory body on conservation issues and concerns to government and the museum community.

VII. Priorities

To satisfy the role of the museum in serving the Saskatchewan public, the museum community has identified several issues. Priorities within these issues vary according to the size and nature of specific museums. They generally fall within the museum's three functional divisions: collections management, public programs and operations.

1. Collections Management

The functions falling under collections management relate to the museum's primary responsibility of collecting and preserving objects which represent our provincial heritage.

Collections are the cornerstone of most museum operations, around which all other functions are built. In total, Saskatchewan museums hold over a million objects in their collections. Not all of these objects are necessarily priceless or representative of the province as a whole. However, most have significance for the community in which they are found. Finite space, human and financial resources require that museums set priorities for collecting, documenting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting only the most representative and unique objects.

Collections are the cornerstone of most museum operations

Due to a shortage of curators in the province's museums, analysis of existing museum collections is limited. Little information is available on the extent of museum collections throughout the province and collecting priorities are difficult to determine.

Many valuable collections are in private hands or owned by collectors outside the province. Museums and galleries have limited resources to buy objects for their collections and more objects are in danger of leaving the province to buyers elsewhere.

Museum collections in the province lack a consistent registration and documentation system and standardized terminology. These would help information exchange, and provide a basis for a provincial inventory/database and a link with national systems.

Without research and documentation, museum collections have limited value. Museums must have sufficient staff and resources to carry out collections research. Many museum collections are housed in unstable environments which risk their long term survival. Museum workers are unfamiliar with basic conservation principles and techniques. Major museums and custodial institutions need to develop in-house conservation expertise.

2. Public Programs

Public programming refers to the museums' secondary responsibility of providing public access to the collections.

The development of a museum's collection is not enough to meet the requirements of the public trust. The collection must be a basis for reaching out to the public and providing them with increased knowledge, awareness and understanding. The museum has many media at its disposal to interact with the public and stimulate their senses. Their success in securing public response depends on the museum's efforts in developing programs other than the basic permanent exhibits.

In a time of increasing competition from other heritage attractions, museums must:

- research their audiences;
- develop public awareness programs which have broad appeal; and
- develop relationships with other museums or cultural and heritage institutions which share a similar mandate.

Saskatchewan people are largely unaware of the benefits of museums. Museums are not fully informed of the public's interests and needs. Marketing studies of museum audiences are needed to develop strategies to encourage more support for museums from the public and private sectors.

Exhibitions are the primary vehicle a museum uses for the delivery of its message to the public. In an age of increasing technological sophistication, higher public expec-

tations and more competition from other attractions, museums must make the message clear, effective and entertaining.

Travelling exhibits provide museums with an opportunity to extend their collections and reach new audiences in other communities. Travelling exhibit production requires that larger museums have adequate staff to research, develop and produce them. Smaller museums must have adequate facilities to receive and display them.

Museums are not fully recognized as educational institutions. With new interest in life-long learning opportunities, museum educational programs must address all age groups and learning levels. Museums need new technologies and teaching approaches to provide educational programs suited to the needs and abilities of their audiences.

Research is an essential link between the museum's collections and public programming. Museums must make their collections accessible to researchers and scholars by ensuring they are properly maintained and documented. Information technologies and systems need to be developed and made accessible to museums to assist with research and information exchange.

Cultural tourism represents a growing source of new museum audiences. Saskatchewan museums have limited resources to compete as tourist attractions. Museums will have to promote themselves more aggressively and create ties with the tourism sector to attract new audiences.

Research is an essential link between the museum's collections and public programming.

3. Operations

Operations refers to the museum's ability to manage both its internal and external functions using the available resources.

Museum operation has become increasingly difficult in recent years due to the complexities of the internal and external environments with which museum managers must deal. To enable museums to adjust to rapidly changing societal and economic conditions, museum managers must have the skills and resources necessary to manage effectively.

Saskatchewan museums have difficulty in attracting and retaining people for specialized positions. To deal with this shortage, museums must provide attractive salary and benefit packages as well as professional development opportunities for employees. This will require the allocation of additional resources to museum operational costs.

To operate museums efficiently, museum administrators require training and experience in the following areas:

- marketing;
- financial management;
- computer skills;
- fund raising; and
- personnel management.

Museums often require workers with discipline-specific skills. The need for conforming to museum standards also stresses skills and attitudes specific to museology. Saskatchewan museums need the following specialized museum workers:

- senior directors and curators;
- generalist curators for smaller museums and galleries;
- conservators and conservation technicians;
- museum educators and interpreters;
- exhibit designers;
- exhibit preparators and fabrication specialists; and
- preparators for specialized collections.

Effective museum management depends on a board of trustees which understands the principles of museum operation. The board must also have the skills and knowledge to make the right decisions. Board members are legally and ethically responsible for the museums they represent.

Museums must observe certain accepted museum procedures in their operation. They must use recognized museum standards as a tool for planning their development and improving their management.

Museums manage many different types of information as part of their operations. Records generated by each museum department or function have diverse requirements for their organization, access and maintenance. Museums must have the necessary technology and skills to manage and access their information systems for internal use and as a service to other museums and the public.

Acceptance of the current economic times requires that museums look to options other than government in securing additional funding resources. Some of these options include sharing resources or working with other museums, increasing audiences through tourism or active public programming and developing fund raising strategies.

VIII. A Strategy For The Future

The Vision

The Saskatchewan museum community may be seen as a network of organizations with similar goals. The network consists of community, regional and provincial museums which share responsibility for the province's heritage collections and programs. Expertise exists at each level to contribute to a collective pool of information and knowledge about museum collections and heritage resources.

Further development of this network could eliminate many areas of competition for resources between museums. Networking could mean sharing collections, expertise and staff; joint purchase of conservation or exhibit supplies; or developing co-operative educational programs and exhibitions.

Networking could also build on the relationships between community, regional and provincial museums. Skill development programs could encourage self-reliance among small community and regional museums. Large museums could provide internships for on-the-job training as well as specialized services such as travelling exhibits for smaller museums. Regional museums could act as a focus for decentralized services from larger centres and assist small museums in their area with technical needs.

The Strategy

Considering the issues facing museums, the provincial government is committed to undertaking certain initiatives which will help realize the vision of a province-wide museum network. These initiatives reflect the goals of the present policy, the role and responsibilities of the provincial government and available resources. While some are ongoing commitments, others will require co-operation with other partners in order to proceed.

Through the identification of a strategy for the provincial government, museums and related agencies may follow a similar process and identify complementary roles and responsibilities. In this way a more rational, organized approach to museum development can be followed.

The Saskatchewan government's role, through the Department of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation, is to distribute the resources at its disposal to the museum community to support the development of a provincial museum network. It will accomplish this through:

- providing leadership;
- providing financial support;
- developing grant programs;
- providing assistance through the expertise of its staff;
- operating facilities;
- managing collections; and
- working co-operatively with various government departments and other levels of government.

The programs and proposals in this strategy are suggested as a means of strengthening the province's museum network. They are, however subject to available funding and will be implemented as resources permit.

Proposed Provincial Government Programs and Initiatives

The following programs and initiatives represent the provincial government's commitment to the future development of Saskatchewan's museums. They will be carried out through the Department of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation which has the primary mandate for cultural and heritage development.

1. To provide for the operation of the province's public museums and custodial institutions by:

- Direct budgetary allocations for the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History's operation;
- Operating and special project grants for the Mackenzie Art Gallery and the Saskatchewan Western Development Museums' operations;
- A Museum and Gallery (Operating) Grant Program to support the operations of museums holding collections or delivering programs of a provincial, regional or local nature; and
- Operating grants for the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

2. To increase knowledge about museum collections:

- Support and facilitate the development of a provincial inventory and data bank on museum collections throughout the province;
- Support research on museum collections which correspond to the mandates of the province's major museums, namely: archaeology, ethnology, paleontology, natural history, social history, commercial history, industrial history, fine art, decorative art, and folk art. This effort should be co-ordinated through major museums to increase knowledge about Saskatchewan's history and to facilitate decision-making for collections management;
- Encourage a system of museum mentorship programs where the province's major museums can identify and work with smaller museums which have a similar collecting mandate to theirs; and
- Promote access to the provincial art collection by producing a catalogue of the collection's holdings.

3. To make museum collections more representative of the province and its natural and cultural heritage:

- Promote the Donations to the Crown Program to encourage private citizens to donate to the province their artwork or artifact collections which are of historic, cultural or artistic significance. The provincial government will then ensure that the collection is housed in a museum and is accessible to the public;
- Attempt to repatriate, on a permanent, long term or short term loan basis, objects and collections owned by individuals or institutions outside the province; and
- Encourage the development of a provincial collections policy which identifies major themes and sub-themes for collecting material that represents Saskatchewan's natural and cultural history.

4. To improve the state of preservation of museum collections:

- Support the implementation of A Conservation Strategy for Saskatchewan Heritage Collections which was developed by the Saskatchewan Heritage Collections Conservation Committee;
- Oversee the development of at least four conservation laboratories set up in the province's major museums, galleries and archives; and
- Provide for a Conservation Extension Service to the Saskatchewan museum community.

5. To improve the quality of Saskatchewan's museums:

- Revise the criteria of the Museum and Gallery Grant Program to stress the implementation of museum standards, long range planning, financial management, staff and volunteer training and development and collections management;
- Provide consultation to the Saskatchewan Recreation Facility Association with their survey of standards for museum facility development as part of a study for the Interprovincial Recreation Facilities Associations Committee;
- Provide a grant to the Museums Association of Saskatchewan for assistance with the cost of developing and delivering museum training programs and providing access to training by museum workers;

6. To increase and diversify sources of support to museums:

- Encourage and support community initiatives which contribute to the quality of Saskatchewan museums;
- Encourage municipal government support for museums by endorsement through the Museum and Gallery Grant Program;
- Brief museums on the resources available to them through government and lottery funded programs and services such as:

  Zone staff of Saskatchewan Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation,

  Regional Recreation Associations of Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association,

  Trust Initiatives Program (TIP), and

  Skills Program for Management Volunteers;
- Monitor federal and provincial government programs and pursue opportunities for joint projects which will benefit the Saskatchewan museum community;
- Provide resource material and consultation on fund raising to museums; and
- Encourage municipalities to develop strategies for arts and heritage facility and program development.

7. To encourage museum workers to undertake training and other opportunities to upgrade their skills:

- Support and promote the development of museum training and internship programs which emphasize skill development in two principal areas:
- **administrative skills**, specifically:

  marketing,

  financial management,

  computer skills,

  fund raising, and

  personnel and volunteer management; and
- **museological skills**, specifically:

  organization and management,

  collections management,

  exhibit design,

  museum education,

collections care, and

specialized interests.

- Encourage the creation of opportunities for the professional development of museum workers such as:

  staff exchanges,

  secondments, and

  temporary assignments;

- Work with federal and provincial human resources departments to examine Saskatchewan's museum labour force to:

  identify skill shortages,

  identify future staff requirements, and

  create opportunities for specialized training and skill development; and

- Promote careers in the museum field.

8. To encourage greater co-operation among museums in the areas of collections, conservation, communications, promotions and programming:

- Encourage an ecomuseum pilot project in at least one region of the province. The project will involve the individuals and communities of a region in preserving and interpreting their collective heritage resources;
- Through the Museum and Gallery Grant Program, encourage museums to share their collections and expertise with other museums and communities. This program could provide for:

  the research, production and distribution costs of travelling exhibitions or museum education programs, and

  the purchase of conservation supplies; and

- Wherever possible, work with the Community Museum Networker system of the Museums Association of Saskatchewan to deliver programs and services.

9. To provide museums with the tools they require to meet increased demands from the public for information and knowledge:

- Encourage the development of a province-wide computerized information-sharing network which will provide museums with:

  the opportunity to share information on their collections, research, exhibitions, education programs and other subjects,

  travelling exhibitions listings,

  training course listings,

  new acquisitions or deaccessioned items listings, and

  personnel changes and job listings;

- Develop a grant program for increasing computer use in qualifying museums. The program could provide:

  assistance with the cost of purchasing hardware and software for qualifying institutions,

  a list of recommended software programs for museums,

  access to computer training programs, and

  funding to develop information management systems;

- Support research into the information management technology needs of Saskatchewan museums and related institutions; and
- Promote the need for standards for computerized museum records management systems.

10. To encourage co-operation between museums and the tourism sector:

- Increase attendance at museums operated by the provincial government by supporting exhibit development and facility upgrading in response to identified needs;
- Work with Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade to ensure that museums are considered as part of a community's tourism assets;
- Work with Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation to ensure museums are adequately marked by signage;
- Develop a heritage marketing plan which will identify, develop and promote resources within provincial regions for local visitors, tourists and special interest groups. The marketing plan will also define current and emerging market segments, visitor services and amenities required to attract tourists and service their needs; and
- Work with Saskatchewan Economic Development and Tourism on select community projects to promote special theme museums.

11. To provide more opportunities for access and participation in museums by all Saskatchewan residents:

- Encourage museums to follow employment fairness guidelines as part of their hiring practices;
- Investigate options for hiring and providing training for native students and workers in museums through programs available from provincial and federal government human resource departments and training institutions; and
- Encourage a balanced geographical distribution of museums around the province.

IX. Conclusion

The provincial museum policy and strategy for implementation is based on the assumption that progress has been made in the provincial museum community over the past decade. With a more mature community, the provincial support agencies have different, often conflicting demands placed on their resources. By identifying Saskatchewan museum priorities and articulating a provincial strategy, the museum policy can serve as a framework for co-ordinating resources to address the most critical needs.

Saskatchewan museums have good reasons for requiring additional funding. However, this funding should be tied to recognized museum standards so the proper management of heritage collections is the first priority.

The museum policy stresses the following:

- sharing resources, expertise and information;
- lessening competition between museums;
- developing the base of professional museological expertise in the province;
- museum promotion and awareness; and
- preservation and presentation of a balanced interpretation of Saskatchewan's natural and human history.

By building on the natural networks which exist at the local, regional and provincial level Saskatchewan museums can work co-operatively towards creating a balanced and cohesive provincial museum community.

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